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SONGS
OF
THE GREEN
VERDUGO
HILLS



MARION EARL



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VERDUGO
HILLS



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Tu-jun-ga

A Legend

In the undiscovered archives
Of the green hills of Verdugo
Is this legend of the gone days
When the hills were not so old:
Once there was an Indian chieftain
Who was sour and harsh and bitter,
With long years of tribal problems
All his heart grown hard and cold.

Never smiled he on his people,
Never spoke he without snarling,
Till 'twas said he'd learned the language
Of some old wolf starved and lame.
Ruled he with a will of iron.
Every squaw, papoose and warrior
Did his wish with dread and fearing
Lest his wrath break forth like flame.

And the mother scared her papoose
Into proper, right behavior
When she plainly, sharply threatened
To involve the old chief's wrath.
Far to northward and to eastward
Lived the harsh chief and his people,
Till at last the war dance sent forth
All the braves on the war path.

Joined the tall and fierce Tulares
With the Piutes and the Monos,
'Gainst the sour chief and his people
In a red determined strife,
Took the lands of his ancestors,

Slew and scattered all his people,
Deemed they had forever blotted
All from off the book of life.

But the chieftain lived to wander
With a small and feeble remnant
And what hardship and starvation
None can tell how they passed
through.

Grown more harsh and stern and bitter

The old leader led them onward
Till the Green Hills of Verdugo
In their beauty came in view.

Their tired way they wended westward

Twixt great mountains and green
foothills

Up the strange and tilted valley
All forlorn and without hope,
Camped they on the sloping summit
East of the sparse live oak forest
Where the village of Tujunga
Clusters now upon the slope.

In the morning somewhat early
Rose the vanquished restless chieftain;

With great gloom upon his spirit
Strode he forth to muse alone;
Then he saw the mighty mountains
And the green foothills below them;
Saw the valley to the westward
And the dim blue range far thrown.

Turning, looked he down the valley
Stretching eastward—saw the new
sun

Kiss the world until it quivered
That delighted wakened lay—

For in these days the Great Spirit
Showed himself on slope and hilltop
Wrote his name upon the ledges
Just as God does here today.

Long that Indian, old and bitter,
Looked upon the wondrous landscape,
Harkened to dawn's wordless music,
And the Spirit's mighty word.
In that hour his mood was shattered;
All the old and icy harshness
Seemed to melt and break within him
And new life was roused and stirred.

And he turned to those who watched
him
Smiling in his new found pleasure,
Spoke the one great word, "Tu-jun-
ga,"

That with meaning throbs and lives,
Mingles rapture, admiration
And the heart's exhilaration,
Just as we do when "delightful"
To the soul expression gives.

Long the old chief looked about him,
Long upon the summit lingered,
Lived and died he in the shelter
Of the Green Verdugo Hills,
And his spirit mellowed, softened,
Millionaire of calm contentment,
'Till his smile was like a mother's
That above her papoose thrills.

Here he lies, up near Haines Canyon,
From the grounds of happy hunting
Comes his spirit oft to linger
In the haunts of old delight.
And the ground is still enchanted
Till whoever walks upon it
Feels the meaning of Tujunga,
And the word's alluring might.

THE GREEN HILLS OF VERDUGO

O ye Green Hills of Verdugo!
Oft I flee to thee again
From the madness of the city,
From the strenuous games of men:
All the moods of love and friendship
In thy fellowship are found,
And I tread thy trails and summits
As one might on hallowed ground.

Where the high slopes of Tujunga
To the groves of Sunland fall,
And the live oak trees are scattered
Down the vale from wall to wall;
Where the slopes of La Cresenta
To Verdugo canon sweep,
The green foothills of enchantment
Their untiring watches keep.

O the Green Hills of Verdugo
Lying 'gainst the breast of day,
By the sunlight kissed and fondled,
Where the light tints glow and play,
And the soft flames, shades and shadows
Blend in colors no man knows,
'Till the emerald reaches blossom
With light's lilly and rare rose.

Lo the great range towers above them
In a glory all its own,
Where stupendous, worldless grandeur
Finds an awe inspiring throne;
But these Green Hills of Verdugo
Are like friends who breathe and live,
Who restore the shattered courage,
And a spirit new can give.

When the skies beyond the green hills
Change to somber tints of gray,
The clouds come and on the hilltops

Their tired heads in gladness lay.
When the green hills smoke like altars
Where the worshiper bows awed,
'Tis not stormclouds trailing fringes,
'Tis the garment hem of God.

Oft the green slopes and long ridges
Glow with the sun's poured out gold,
While the tints of blue are mingling
Where the riven gulches hold
Their enchanted shades and shadows;
And o'er all and widely flung
Mingled blue and sifted silver
Calm the babbling of the tongue.

When upon the blushing ledges
God has kissed the world good night,
And the far flung crests are burning
With their opal radiance bright,
Soft the gossimer twilight deepens,
Sweet the shades of darkness fall,
O'er the Green Hills of Verdugo,
Spreading peace and night o'er all.

LET US BUILD A BETTER CITY

Let us build a splendid city,
Castellated, and supreme,
That shall meet the bounds and measures
Of a master builder's dream.
Let us fire our hearts with passion
For the good and true, the skill
To set up a better city
Sitting here upon her hill.

Swirling streets and reeking alleys,
Business hives that touch the cloud,
Turmoil like the storm of battle,
Din and clangor echoing loud,
None shall bring into our city
Where the peace of God was meant,

And men fill their hungry coffers
With the gold of calm content.

We will build a different city,
Better than the lands have known,
We will breathe the brother spirit
Into wood and brick and stone.
Shame the strife of petty passion
Warring faction, rant of clan
Wake to tide and new occasions
Act the big, broad visioned man.

THE PARSON OF THE GREEN VERDUGO HILLS

They have borne him to his couch
On the hill's exalted crest,
'Mid the sage and chapparal
Laid his weary form to rest.

Silent are the reverent guns
Speaking in their last salute,
And the songs have died away,
Tongues of eloquence are mute.

Gone the sad and thoughtful throng
That bowed close beside the bier;
All alone in state he lies
With the mountains pressing near.

Here amid the scenes he loved,
By the genial sun caressed,
Proves he to the thoughtful heart
That the last of earth is best.

He has passed through gates of good
Out of struggle, care and strife,
And mortality is lost
Swallowed up of endless life.

Lo a prince has gone afar,
In our midst no more to stand,
To subdue us with a smile,
Greet us with uplifted hand.

O, the streets are not the same
As they were before he went;
Gone the spirit atmosphere
That his presence always lent.

Battle bruised from olden war
When he passed thro shot and shell,
That the land might still be one,
For man's sake went down through
hell.

Soldier in a nobler strife
Fought he long the wiles of sin,
That the truth might be the law
And the right be ushered in.

Like a rock amid the flood
When the springtime freshet runs,
More heroic long he stood
Than amid the hail of guns.

Like the bright and swerveless star
On his orbit true he moved;
Truth to duty and to God
Many years he faithful proved.

Strength that needeth not a word
To its magic might express;
Love that overflowed with deed
To bring comfort in distress.

Such men do not really die
When they move from out the clay;
He has passed on out of sight
From the village gone away.

OUR MILLIONAIRES

Allegiance to a realm they own
That knows no currency of gold,
They have no granaries heaped full
Of profits from things bought and sold;
Their bank books burst not, written full
Of symbolled riches, while they cling,
Not choice securities their bost,
Nor lands to which they've tied a string.

Our millionaires sit in the sun
While their minds roam all worlds at will,
And at all fruited trees of thought
Like happy schoolboys take their fill;
They own the sunsets, and the stars,
For them the voices of the night,
No man dare take from them a share
Of noon's lifegiving, holy light.

These far flung landscapes all are theirs,
Stored with the mines no man can spoil,
Others hold deeds and taxes pay.
Sweat for the harvests of the soil;
But theirs the vistas and the wealth
That the soul with great treasure fills,
Theirs that most glorious heratage—
They own the Green Verdugo Hills.

Our millionaires are friendly folks,
Who mingle to the heart's content,
And count the hours of fellowship
As time made perfect and well spent,
They reap the golden grain of joy

That grows in the contented mind,
They know the good of simple life
With the mind's freedom unconfined.

Not theirs the halls of luxury
Stored with the trophies of old time,
The humble homes in which they dwell
Have known a glory more sublime,
Whose doors swing open at a touch,
And kindly neighbors often meet,
Whose windows like oasis palms
Lure from the journey's sand and heat.

Our millionaires are widely known
Where rivers run and mountains reach,
And many are made richer far
By what such clear ideals teach.
The chosen ones who join their Club
Have checkbooks on the Bank of Joy,
And find in a contented heart
Pure gold the years can not destroy.

Our millionaires have silvering brows.
Time like a mother with her boys
May fold them to her gentle heart,
To slumber with their smiles and joys,
But when they wake may they make known
The glory of their class and clan.
Where hearts made right are current coin,
The measure of immortal man.

THE RESCUE—A TALE OF OLD TUJUNGA

DAYS

Sunset in the magical valley
That lies 'twixt the hills and the mountains.¹
The gulch-riven bulwarks to northward
With the tints of rare red roses glow:
Across, on the green, sloping foothills
The twilight is weaving her shadows
And sifting soft shades, from the clearcut
Skyline to the reaches below.

Up the long tortuous grade to the eastward²
Moves a canvas topped, rickety wagon
O'er the trail to the wheel unaccustomed
Drawn by a plodding ox team;
The driver a worn, weary woman
Whose spirit defiant within her
Had fought with the desert and conquered,
And battled with mountain and stream.

Long since from the Father of Waters
The strong hearted, clear visioned husband
Had turned his face to the westward
For the goal of his soul's great desire,
They passed o'er the rolling prairie
Unharm'd by the wrath of the Indian,
They trailed through the tall rocky mountains,
The lure of the quest like to fire.

His courage their peace amid danger,
The skill of his hand was like magic,
He was wise in the lore of the Yankee
Who never is baffled or checked,
The mother, the son and small daughter
Serene in their trust in his prowess,
No matter what danger or peril,
Deliverance were calm to expect.

One night from the shadows he staggered
From the last thoughtful care of the oxen,
And dropped to the ground by the campfire
In the clutch of a strange, cutting pain;
An hour, and the illness was ended,
The lure of the sunset had vanished,
The hand had forgotten its cunning
To follow the voice of the brain.

O, dumb with her terror and anguish
By her dead in the weird silent moonlight
The wife sat till the hour of the morning
Her soul on the wrack smitten through;
But the light like a trumpet awoke her
To the needs of the living, dependent
Alone for their lives on her action.
She rose up a creature made new.

The soul that had gone from its temple
Seemed to come back again from the dark-
ness

Become in her flesh all incarnate.
She wakened her ten summered son,
They buried their dead without weeping,
They fought their way onward and west-
ward

Nurse, driver and hunter and captain,
Through peril and sickness she won.

Now not far to the westward and northward
Lay the lands by the wide smiling channel
That had lured them o'er mountain and

desert

The home of their battle and dream⁴,
Down into the wide sloping valley⁵
The rickety canvas topped wagon
Wound through the clustering live oaks,
To pause by the swift tumbling stream

That spilled from the mouth of a canyon⁶
And spread as it swiftly descended
O'er a pathway of pebbles and boulders,
They quickly made camp for the night.⁶
The woman and tender, true mother,
The hunter and driver and **captain**,
Gazed long on the landmarks around her
Bewildered, confused at the sight;

Alone in the still wondrous mountains
She knew she had wandered by strange trail
From the plain of far-famed San Fernando,
That the path to her hopes led across,
And on o'er the pass in low mountains,
Down to the mild, restless ocean,
And on 'twixt the cliffs and the billows,
She was baffled, soul weary and lost.⁷

The fever-worn, frail infant daughter
She held to her breast softly crooning,
While the boy looked after the oxen,
And courage was plumed for her flight,
When suddenly came the swift trampling
Of horsemen in eagerness riding,
And lo, the camp was surrounded
By bandits who were eager to fight.

They plundered the stores in the wagon
To take in the stripped canvas cover,
Made sport of the terror and pleading,
Till the leader his last order flung:
"Leave the brat where she is for the coyotes
Shoot the boy lest he fight and betray us,
The woman is mine, turn the oxen

The cattle that pasture among.””

The moment was tense with its terror,
The will of the red handed leader
Was law that none dared to question,
Yet none moved a hand to obey.
With a snarl that was angry and wolf-like
The leader drew gun and aimed slowly
At the boy who stood dumb and expectant,
His heart in the frenzy to slay.

Then out of the silence rang sharply
An order, firm, fearless, resistless:
“You fool, put that gun in its holster,
My word is your law, else you die.”
Then into the murderous circle
There stepped a tall man, calm, determined,
Whose beard reaching down to his waist
band
Was like snows on tall summits that lie.

Straight up to the dark mounted leader
He strode with his weapon drawn, ready,
And spoke with the tone that was final:
“Go back to your place and remain,
This woman, these children, these oxen,
These stores that are wasted and frugal,
This outfit no man shall dare plunder
Till me that have worsted and slain.”

O, strange was the power of his speaking
And the gleam in his eye, and in silence
The bandits rode off in the twilight,
Molested the campers no more.
And kindly, resourceful and gentle,
The stranger enkindled a campfire,
Brought calmness and strength to their
spirits,
And watched till the darkness was o’er.

Next morning he guided them safely
Down the oak scattered slopes of Tujung

Across the wide spilling river,
Down to the worn trail they had missed,
On up through the wide San Fernando
To the pass at the head of the valley,
That leads far down to the ocean.
Three days did he guidance insist.

At last by the flickering campfire
When the mother and son sought expression
Of the gratitude due to the stranger
His manner grew restless, intense,
"It is I who owe thanks for your kindness
The chance for a deed of atonement."
And this is the tale that their waiting
Bade him like a confession commence:

"These mountains to me are a prison,
Till death, is written my sentence.
Though the law has not fettered nor
scourged me,
I cannot my prison bars break.
In my zeal I did a great evil
That good as they praised it and saw it
Might come to my church, that was founded
By a prophet that God did awake.

"O God, there are stains on my fingers
That glow in the watches of midnight,
A burning no water can lessen,
Nor lave the defilement of red.
Another and I were the leaders
Who ordered our comrades to ambush
Like Indians decked for the battle,
Mountain Meadow we strewed with the
dead.

"The law of the flag, and of Moses,
The law of the mind and the spirit,
I broke at the will of a leader
With a cause to promote and defend,
My comrade was captured and punished,
I slipped from the reach of my nation,

I hid where the bloodhounds of justice
Their scent for the prey did not send.

"I live with the outlaws and bandits
In a great yawning canyon safe hidden,
My heart and my mind are tormented,
No rest and no respite I know;
Did I save you from shame and destruction?
I have eased mine own heart of the gnawing
The wrath and the torment of conscience,
Like a seed gnawed by worms 'neath the
snow.

"O, son of a heroic mother,
Let this truth be cut deep as with chisel:
False the creed and the boasted religion,
That ignores what God wrote on man's
heart,
In ourselves shines a light that is final,
What we are points a Day of last Judgment,
Love toward all men is a real man's religion
That mocks every church builder's art."

Then the stranger and ancient deliverer¹
Rose and strode off into the darkness,
Mounted horse and rapidly riding
Passed forever out of their sight.
Still up in Tujunga's Big Canyon
Stands, gnawed by the years and the tem-
pests
The hut of the old exiled leader
Who wandered at last to the light.

¹ The Valley of the Green Verdugo Hills, reaching from the Arroyo Seco to the Big Tujunga, which technically speaking includes the La Canada, the Verdugo and the Tujunga Valleys.

² The trail which passed near the County Road from Montrose to Tujunga.

³ The Carpenteria valley twelve miles this

side of Santa Barbara.

¹ The Tujunga Valley.

² Haines Canyon.

³ Near Haines Canyon Road and Monte Vista Street, Tujunga.

⁴ She had missed the intended route through the San Fernando Valley.

⁵ The Big Tujunga Canyon was infested with outlaws and bandits who at times had a considerable number of stolen cattle there.

⁶ For years there lived in the Big Tujunga Canyon, according to old settlers, the character this story describes. The facts of history confirm the traditions of the first settlers. The other characters of the story are real people, one of whom is still living.



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